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# Freda Wolfsheimer, transcript only

Freda Wolfsheimer

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L.B. Now, you know that this is for Union College.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. For the library.

F.W. For the library, yah.

L.B. Right. And students will listen to it, and, then, Professor Berk and I will go over these, they'll be typed up, and...um, we'll, we'll just study the information that's in them.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Uh, for use in history classes. Because, um...we...feel that we're sort of setting up a memory bank, a bank...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. ...where we're storing memories...

F.W. Memories...

L.B. ...that people have...

F.W. ...have...yah...

L.B. ...of what happened, during a certain period in Europe.

F.W. ...in Europe...

L.B. All right?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. And then, at the end of this, uh, our, of our conversation, then I'll just, I'll ask you to sign, um...a piece of paper saying that it's O.K. for this to go into the Union College Library.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. All right?

F.W. O.K.

L.B. All right. Now, let's start, you know, just easy, if you'd say your name so the tape recorder can pick you up.

F.W. Freda Wolfsheimer.

L.B. All right. Now, Robyn, would you turn that off.

(Tape off)

L.B. That's right. Now we'll start again. So, you gave us your name, that's Freda Wolfsheimer.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Now, could you tell me what year you were born? Would you mind?

F.W. Yah, not at all, uh...1897.

L.B. 1897?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And what town were you born in?

F.W. Weickersheim.

L.B. Maybe you better spell that for us. (Laughter). We have trouble spelling the names of towns.

F.W. W-e-i-c-k-e-r-s-h-e-i-m.

L.B. Weickersheim?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And, what's the nearest big city to that? What part of Germany would that be in?

F.W. Uh, south Germany, it is, uh, near Wurtsburg...

L.B. Mm hm.

F.W. ...or, Stuttgart is the capital. Stuttgart.

L.B. Mm hm. Now, I don't have a map...of, um...Germany. Is that, uh, does that section of Germany have a name? I mean, like Bavaria, or Frussia...

F.W. Wirtenburg, Wirtenburg.

L.B. Wirtenburg?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. So that's, that's the section?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Now, what kind of a town was it? About how big was it?

32 F.W. Not big. There was about 2000, about 2000 people.

L.B. 2000 people?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And you were born in this town?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And did you live there all your life?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. All right. And, about how many Jewish families were there?

F.W. We had about, uh.....my time, 15.

L.B. Jewish families?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. And, uh....um...how ma...uh, wh..how could you es...could you estimate... 1897, could you estimate about how many people there would be in each family? 4, how many children, for example?

F.W. Here were 3, here were 5...about 4 in each family....

L.B. 4 in each family?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. 4 children, or 4 people?

F.W. 4 children.

L.B. 4 children.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. So that would be, a household...6 times 15, approximately, would be about nine...there would be about 90 Jews in the town?

F.W. No, not so many.

L.B. Not so many?

F.W. No, no, no...

L.B. Less?

F.W. No, less, less...yah, yah, not so many.

L.B. Now, what sort of a town was Weickersheim? Was it an industrial town?

F.W. Yes, there was an, or...organ, organ factory, an organ factory.

L.B. They made, uh, musical organs.

F.W. Organs, yah, and he sent them all to South America, and this country, all over.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And what...

517 F.W. were...farmer...

L.B. Farming.

F.W. Farming, yah.

L.B. Is it flat country, or is it, uh, mountain...what is it, mostly flat?

F.W. Mostly flat, but we had some, uh...the...wine grew there was very well-known.

L.B. The wine?

F.W. Wineryard, uh...

L.B. The vineyards?

F.W. Vineyards, yah.

L.B. So they grew vin...they, they had vineyards growing there?

F.W. Yah, yah, yah.

L.B. So that you had...organ, were, were they factories, actually?

F.W. It was a big factory, yah, one big factory.

L.B. One big...

F.W. They have 200, about 200 labored there, working.

L.B. Now, the organs were made by hand? Or by machine and hand?

F.W. Uh, machine and hand, I, I think so, yah.

L.B. Mm. And you grew up in this town.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And how many people were in your family?

F.W. 5.

L.B. Oh.

F.W. We had 3, 3 girls, and my parents.

L.B. 3 girls and your parents.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And, um, you lived in, what, in a house?

F.W. Yah, we had our own house.

L.B. You had your own house.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And what was the house made of?

F.W. Stone.

L.B. Stone?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Was it on a street, or...

F.W. Yah, on the Haupt, on the Haupt Street, on the....how you say in English...

L.B. High Street?

F.W. Yah, on the...Main Street, the Main Street...

L.B. The Main Street?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Haupt Street?

F.W. Haupt Strasse.

L.B. Hauptstrasse.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. O.K. Now, um...

F.W. My English is not so good.

L.B. It's fine.

R.K. Very good.

L.B. That's fine. And if you ca...if you cannot think of an English word, say it in German, maybe we can work it out.

F.W. Yah, yah...

L.B. All right?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. So, there were 3 girls. And where were you, were you the oldest?

F.W. No, I was the middle.

L.B. You were the middle.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And, how old was the oldest, uh, more, was she one year older?

F.W. We were one year apart.

L.B. One year apart?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. All right. 1897...I don't know enough German history, that's my problem. Do you?

R.K. Uh...(Laughter)...put me on the spot...

L.B. Now, let's see, we'll go back to...you lived in your own house, and it was a stone...How many rooms were in your house?

F.W. Oh, my...

L.B. Did you live in the whole house?

F.W. Yah, yah, we occupied the whole house, yah, by ourselves.

L.B. And how many rooms would you say...was there an upstairs and downstairs?

24 F.W. Oh yah, , 2-story, upstairs, that's 2-story...

L.B. Right.

F.W. ...house, yah. And we had a business, uh....wait a minute, how you say in English, uh....material, where you make, uh...

L.B. Yes, yard goods.

F.W. Yah, yah...all kinds of...

L.B. Fabric.

F.W. Yah, fabric.

L.B. That's what your father did?

F.W. Bus...business, yah.

L.B. He had a yard goods business?

F.W. That's right, yard goods.

L.B. And then, he...that was on the bottom floor, then?

F.W. Yah, that's on the bottom floor, und across from the, from the business place was a little office. Und, the other rooms were all upstairs and in the second floor.

L.B. Now, what was upstairs...the, the home was upstairs on the, on the second floor?

F.W. Yah, the...

L.B. The living quarters.

F.W. The living quarters were upstairs....

L.B. Right, but...

F.W. ...on the second floor.

L.B. But the...business part was downstairs?

F.W. Was downstairs, yah.

L.B. I see. Now, who worked in this business, other than your father?

F.W. My father and my mother. Then, I go to school, to a...it was a Catholic convent, in Bad Mergentheim, that's the next big, bigger city, Bad Mergentheim.

L.B. You'd better spell that for us, too. Bad...

F.W. Mergentheim.

L.B. Do you remember how to spell that?

F.W. M-e-r-g-e-n-t-h-e-i-m.

L.B. Bad Mergentheim. And...

F.W. Yah, it's, uh, good, a well-known, uh, a well-known place, uh, for, uh...

L.B. Baths.

F.W. Baths, yah.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Like Saugatoga.

L.B. Right, right. And that's where you went to school.

109 F.W. I went to school there for 3 years, then I went for 2 years in,<sup>1</sup> near Frankfurt...

L.B. Mm hm.

F.W. Relatives, they have a...big department store, and I was working there for... 2 years, just, my father passed away, then I have to go home.

L.B. Mm. Now let's go back. So your mother and father worked in the store, selling yard goods, right?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And you went to school, in Bad Mergentheim, right?

F.W. Bad Mergentheim, yah.

L.B. And you went to school in a Catholic convent?

F.W. Catholic convent, yah. I travelled in the mor...in the...morning, there, and come back in the evening.

L.B. How did you travel?

F.W. By train.

L.B. By train.

F.W. You know, just like...Albany and Schenectady...

L.B. Yeah.

110 F.W. ? apart, only 12, uh...

L.B. Miles.

F.W. No, kilometers.

L.B. Yeah, uh huh. And they were 12 kilometers apart.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Now, did your sisters go to the same school?

F.W. Yes, both of them, yah.

L.B. So the 3 of you would get on the train together, when everybody was on enough, and go to school together?

F.W. That's, that's right.

L.B. And, you started there at what age, the school?

F.W. I finished, uh...gymnasia, in Weickersheim, also, gymnasium, 3 classes. Und, after those 3 classes, I went to Mergen...Bad Mergentheim.

L.B. Oh, in other words, you went to school before Bad Mergentheim?

F.W. Oh yes.

L.B. Oh, all right, now, let's, where did you start school? You started school...

F.W. In Weickersheim.

L.B. ...in Weickersheim.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. At what age?

F.W. I'm not sure, 7, 7 years, I think, 7 years, has to be, yah.

L.B. And, what kind of a school did you go to there?

F.W. Uh...folkschule...

L.B. Folkschule?

F.W. Folkschule, yah.

L.B. Yeah? Is that like a public school?

F.W. Yah, a public school, that's right.

L.B. And, it was run by the German government?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Was it free?

F.W. No, you have to pay for.

L.B. You have to pay.

F.W. Pay for.

L.B. Do you remember what kind of things you studied there?

F.W. I had...general, you know, what, in the public school. But then, after the public school, I went for 3 years in the...reale schule, that's like a gymnasium...

L.B. How many years were you in the public school?

F.W. From, from 7 to, uh...I'd say, 12.

L.B. 5 years.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And then you went to a reale schule, in Weickersheim?

F.W. In Weickersheim, yah.

L.B. Yeah.

1512 F.W. And after this, I came, I went for 3 years in....Bad Mergentheim. There I had some...uh.....bookkeeping...French lessons, singing, und...what else? How you say, '...how you have to...to support, uh, yourself, sewing, sewing und...all kinds...

L.B. You mean economically support yourself? Or, you mean, how to behave?

F.W. Behave, like...

L.B. Etiquette...

F.W. Etiquette...

L.B. Deportment.

F.W. That's right, that's right.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. How to comport oneself, you know...in pub...

F.W. Comport, yah.

L.B. ...in public

F.W. Yah, that's right.

L.B. Right?

F.W. Yah. It was very nice.

L.B. (Long pause). Did you enjoy your school years?

F.W. Yah, very much.

L.B. You did?

F.W. Yah, very much.

L.B. Now, were there many other Jewish girls in your...school? At, let's say, when you were going to school in Weickersheim. First, you went to the folkschule.

F.W. The folkschule, yah.

L.B. Right. Were there Jewish children with you in school?

F.W. A cousin of mine, und...uh, a cousin of mine, und the other children were, the other, were all older, not my age anymore.

L.B. But there were Jewish children?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. I'm trying to see, in, uh, in uh...you were 7 years old, you were born 1897, that makes 1904...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. ...you started school.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And you were in, uh, the folkschule 5 years.

F.W. Yah.  
L.B. So, 1909, you were in the reale schule?  
F.W. Reale schule.  
L.B. Right?  
F.W. Right.  
L.B. And you went there 3 years.  
F.W. 3 years.  
L.B. Is that correct?  
F.W. Yah.  
L.B. So, 1912, you were in the convent.  
F.W. Yah.  
L.B. Going back and forth on the train.  
F.W. Every day, yah.  
L.B. Right. And that was for 3 years, you say?  
F.W. For 3 years, yah, that's right.  
L.B. So that takes us already into the War period.  
F.W. Yah.  
L.B. Right?  
F.W. Yah.  
L.B. Convent...for 3 years....I'm just trying to get a picture in my head, you see, of what happened, when.  
F.W. Yah, yah.  
L.B. All right. Now, when you were in Weickersheim, you were in the folkschule, and in the reale schule...and, how many other Jewish children would you say were in the school system? There was only the one school, in the, in the, in the ci... in the town, is that correct?  
F.W. Yah, yah, yah, that's in my time...  
L.B. Yeah, yes.  
F.W. Everything changed, everything changed much.  
L.B. Yes.  
F.W. Yah.  
L.B. How many other Jewish children in the whole school? Cause, I know, when I went to school, in my neighborhood, in America...  
F.W. Yah.  
L.B. ...there were 2 other Jewish children in a hu...in a really big school. I knew how many there were.  
F.W. Yah, yah, yah. Well, my 2 sisters, we were only a year apart, and a cousin of mine...  
L.B. Yeah, yeah.  
F.W. Und, then I know another family, but they were after me, they were younger, 4, 4 more children, from another family, but they were younger, not so, not my age anymore.  
L.B. So, actually there are very few.  
F.W. Yah, yah.  
L.B. Now, how did this affect your school life? Did it make a difference?  
F.W. No, no, no, no. This time, everything...no, everything was fine, not so...yah...  
L.B. And it didn't matter, as far as the school was concerned, or the children were concerned, whether you were Jewish or not Jewish?  
F.W. No, no, it was no different, no difference.  
L.B. Did you have religious education?  
F.W. Wha...what did you say?  
L.B. Religious education.  
F.W. Yah, yah...  
L.B. That would be after school?  
F.W. After school, and Sunday, we have, uh....Sunday school. There came a man from Mergentheim, from Mergentheim, and give us religious, uh...lessons.  
L.B. But this was aside from the regular school?  
F.W. Yah, yah.  
L.B. But, I mean, in the school itself, in the schools, uh, the folkschule and reale schule, did you have religious education?

F.W. No, no.

L.B. There were, some of the Aus...in the Austrian school system...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. ...there was an hour, remember, it would be set apart, at the end of the day.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Catholic children went for Catholic instruction, and Jewish children had Jewish instruction, and the Protestant children had Protestant instruction.

F.W. Oh, when we have, when we have our religion thing, we had...there was only a, uh...in this time we had no, uh...a rabbi was in our town. Und, he give us some, uh, religious, uh, lessons.

L.B. In, in the school, in the, in the folkschule?

F.W. Yah, but not in the folkschule, uh, on Sun...on, in, uh, it was in Temple, in the synagogue.

L.B. All right, no, I'm talking about, was this part of the folkschule program? Did, was there religious teaching, as part of the folkschule program?

F.W. Yah, yah, yah, yah, yah...yah. But, we had, uh, when we had our, uh...uh, uh, religious school, we had, uh, often we went to our...to our, our rabbi give us a religion lessons.

L.B. Oh. So, you mean, you would go out of the school...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. ...to the Temple?

F.W. Yah...yah.

L.B. All right, all right.

F.W. That's, yah.

L.B. All right. So...Robyn, you interrupt any time that you think...you know...

R.K. Mm hm.

L.B. Either if I'm off the track, or if I'm not....So, yours, a very small Jewish community...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Do you have a synagogue?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. You do?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. What kind was it? Was it a Conservative, or Reform?

F.W. No, no, it, uh...

L.B. Orthodox?

F.W. Orthodox, yah.

L.B. It was an Orthodox.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Did everybody in the community belong to it?

F.W. Yah yah, yah yah, yah yah.

L.B. Did, and your family did, too?

F.W. Oh yes.

L.B. Would you consider that your family were....observant Jews? Did they observe the Sabbath and the holidays?

F.W. Oh yah, oh yah, oh yah, very strictly, very...

L.B. How, how did that, how did they do that? Describe, tell us how they did it.

F.W. Uh, the business was closed.

L.B. On Saturday.

F.W. On Saturday. And there were, no extra work done, was not, we cooked our meals before Friday, und, uh...everything like this, no, no business, that's the most strict, that's all, Sabbath, yah.

L.B. Now, did your father, uh...go...did he go to synagogue every day, or just on, on, uh, Friday, or, and/or Saturday?

255 F.W. Friday, Friday und Saturday, und on, on special occasion, you know, uh, like, uh, well, the (first) day, or things like this, or the...uh...? Holy Day...

L.B. Mm hm.

F.W. ...he went there, too.

L.B. And, did the whole family go with him?



F.W. Yah.

L.B. Now, did you, did the women have to sit in a separate p...uh, part?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. You did?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. How was it divided? With a curtain, or...

F.W. No, no, we were upstairs, there's a upstairs, and the men were downstairs.

L.B. I see.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. I see. How many, di...uh, m...was the synagogue in a house, or did it have a, a separate building?

F.W. No, this was a separate building, very nice synagogue.

L.B. It was?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And yet, it was such a small community.

F.W. Yah, because, uh, see, when the...children, or the young folks, growing up, they all going big city, we were not, uh, living in Weickersheim anymore. Well, was no, nothing...no business, or nothing to do, no thing; so all the young people were...about 18, 20 or older, they're all going in bigger cities, moving in bigger cities.

L.B. That happens now, too. (Laughs).

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Yeah. So, but then, how does that explain, how do you connect that with the fact that you had such a nice synagogue?

F.W. Yah, because, uh, before my time, there were many more Jewish families living there as, uh, after us, you know, yah.

L.B. Oh.

F.W. Und, then, when they get older, the girls get married with the, the boys, und...nobody wants settle in small city anymore.

L.B. But, before your time, they did stay?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. Is that what you're saying?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. (Long pause). You said the nearest big city was Stuttgart? Am I correct?

F.W. Stuttgart, yah, also...

L.B. Stuttgart...

F.W. ...or Wirtsburg. Wirtsburg is, uh...

L.B. Wirtsburg.

F.W. This is Bavaria, and Stuttgart is Wirtenberg, that's the capital from, from...

L.B. Stuttgart was the capital. That's not on that map, I don't think.

R.K. Do you have the map here?

L.B. It's probably in the book here, someplace. Here, look in here. In, right here. And, what was the capital of Bavaria, now, it was, uh...

F.W. Not, Bavaria, not the capital, Wirtsburg.

L.B. Wirtsburg.

F.W. Oh, a big city.

L.B. Those were the nearest cities to you?

F.W. Yah. I mean, there were more, but smaller ones...

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. ...not so...important.

L.B. Yeah. Now, what did, uh...so the, the German population, now you said there were about 2000, did I, do I remember correctly?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. Of Weickersheim. What did they do, mostly?

F.W. They mostly have business.

L.B. Business?

F.W. Business, yah.

L.B. What kind of business did they have? Other than the organ factory.

F.W. Uh...there were drugstores, und there were, uh.....where you buy grocery, and things like this...

L.B. Grocery stores, yah.

F.W. Yes, grocery store. Und, I, uh, I had an uncle there, who had a, a...grain, a grain, you know, wholesale...

L.B. Yes.

F.W. He bought the things from the farmers, und he sells in big cities, or big places, uh, things like grain, like , uh, things like this...

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Yeah.

L.B. Now, you know, I'm gonna have to get a map of Poland and of Germany...

R.K. Mm hm. You have some good maps of Poland here.

L.B. I mean, I, I know, but, uh, better, with more cities on it, because it's hard to locate these places unless you have a detailed map. Um...now, were these only, mostly Jews that owned these businesses? I'm talking about the German non-Jewish population. What did they do?

F.W. Uh, do?

L.B. Everybody.

F.W. Everybody had business, too, and then farmer.

L.B. Oh.

F.W. Farm.

L.B. Now, who worked in the organ factory? Did Jews work in the organ factory?

F.W. No, no.

L.B. No.

F.W. Not, not one.

L.B. Not one.

F.W. No.

L.B. Why do you think that was?

F.W. Uh, were not...meant for this, you know, this...I don't know, this, uh, labor, were not....I don't say not good enough, but it were not, uh...I cannot express myself, uh...

L.B. It wasn't looked upon with favor, would you say?

F.W. Yah, some...like this, yah. The...the Jews were in better, uh, uh...let's say, better conditions, you know...were not like...not like here, you go in a factory, und, und, und...this were not in our place...

R.K. They weren't laborers.

F.W. Not laborers, no.

R.K. No, they owned their own businesses.

F.W. Own businesses, yah, that's, that's right.

L.B. So there was not one Jew in the whole organ factory?

F.W. No, no, but...

L.B. Was the organ factory owned by a Jew?

F.W. No, but we were very close to them. My father had a, a....  
you know what? is? Real estate, my father were in real estate business,  
besides our store, we had. Und he sold them...he was a commerzinrat. He was very friendly, und when he would buy something, he always called my father, und, you know, uh...to handle this, uh, business. He, he bought lots of places there, und he was the only one who was wealthy, you know.

L.B. Now, who was this? This friend of your father's you're talking about, who was a commerzianrad?

F.W. Laukuff.

L.B. Laukuff was his name?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Was he a Jew?

F.W. No.

L.B. No. Are you telling me...that, uh, your, your father was friendly with non-Jews, as well as with Jews?

F.W. Oh yah, oh yah, oh yah. Oh, he was very well-liked, my father. Everybody, when something gets sold, or got, uh, changed hands, you know, und they called my father to...make this business. He was in real estate, my father, too.

L.B. In addition to the, the...merchandizing?

F.W. Yah, yah, yah.

L.B. I heard that from someplace else. So they acted as, like, what we call a broker.

F.W. Some...something like that, yah. Und, when, uh...Mr. Laukuff know somebody was selling something, he called my father und...made, uh, the agent, you know, he settled the....thus, us, he closed the business. So, that's...

L.B. Your father would be the agent to close the business?

F.W. Yah.

R.K. He would draw up the contract?

F.W. Yah.

R.K. Uh huh.

L.B. In other words, they considered that your father had the necessary skill?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. Legal, or uh...know...the knowledge...

F.W. The knowl...knowledge, yah.

L.B. Right.

F.W. That's right.

L.B. To complete the, the, uh, sale, the transaction.

F.W. That's right, that's right.

L.B. Whereas, this real estate person...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. ...like a salesman, did not have this.

F.W. No.

L.B. Is that correct?

F.W. No. Yah, that is correct, yah.

L.B. So he made, he and your father were partners, in a sense.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Not really partners...

F.W. Not partner, no...

L.B. But they worked together.

F.W. Together, yah.

L.B. Now, what was expected of you...as a young girl, when you were growing up, before the War...the First War? What kind of expectation, you know, what did your parents expect from you? What kind of a life did you lead?

407 F.W. O.K. I went, uh, for 2 years, <sup>Heidelberg, was a</sup> ...second cousin of, of my...from my father. And they had a big business there, and I stayed there.

L.B. Where is this, now?

F.W. Frankfurt.

L.B. All right. Now, when did you go there, what year?

F.W. After I...after I...

L.B. Graduated the convent?

417 F.W. After I graduated the convent, yah. I stayed there, to know, to go under people, met people und learned the business. Und, so I stayed there with my father, he passed away very young.

L.B. Now wait a minute. (Pause). 1912, you entered the convent.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And you stayed there for 3 years.

F.W. 3 years.

L.B. So by the...1915, if you went to Frankfurt in 1915...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. The War was already on.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Is that right?

F.W. That's right, First World War.

L.B. Right.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And you went to Frankfurt...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. ...and the wa...you didn't...it didn't affect you at all?

F.W. No, no, not, uh...you know, uh, we were living in the country, so...  
so Weickersheim was not a big city, you know...

L.B. Yeah, but you moved to Frankfurt.

F.W. Mm, uh...

L.B. No?

F.W. I don't moved, I stayed there.

L.B. You stayed in Frankfurt...

F.W. Yah, by Hechstermein.

L.B. Hechstermein, that's your cousin?

F.W. Second cousin.

L.B. Second cousin.

F.W. Second cousin, yah.

L.B. Right. To learn the business, the department store.

F.W. The business is there, the department store und...see people, met people,  
und come under, und young people, met young people, you know, und...

L.B. Now, this was during the War, though?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. But, what, so what I'm asking you is, did you feel any effects of the War  
during this time that you were in Frankfurt, before your father died?

F.W. Yah...yah, yah.

L.B. You did feel it?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. How?

F.W. Then my father, und, uh, when I was, then he want call me home, he says I  
should come home...und stay home, thus the family stay together, you know.

L.B. Because of the War?

F.W. War, yah.

L.B. Well, how...

F.W. Because the little, the little places were not so...uh...were not so...  
affect...from the War, as were the big cities, you know.

L.B. All right, now, how did you feel the War, in Frankfurt? That's what I want  
to know.

F.W. Oh, my, my parents sent, uh....food there, so far they can do und...uh, so  
far they can send it, you know, so far, so far was allowed. Und, oth..otherwise  
it was...not, not bad.

L.B. It was not bad?

F.W. No.

L.B. No. But there was some shortage of food, then, is what you're telling me?

F.W. Oh yah, oh yah, oh yah, oh yah. The people come out, und, uh...there, like  
Weickersheim, they went to a smaller place and get, uh...how you say? Uhh, buy  
something, und, you know, thus they get enough to eat in the city. People were  
in Frankfurt, from all over they come.

L.B. You mean, they would come to small villages...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. ...from Frankfurt, and other places?

F.W. Yah, to farmers, or, li...people who have farm places, und come there, und,  
uh....to, to get some food.

L.B. You mean, like eggs and butter and cheese?

F.W. Eggs and butter and cheese, whatever they can...whatever they can get, yah.

L.B. So you were working in a department store.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. In your cousin's department store.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And then, you were also meeting young people.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Now, weren't most of the young boys away in the army?

F.W. No, these were younger, younger, younger people. These were younger people...  
17, 18 years, they were not, not in the army.

L.B. They were not yet in the army?

F.W. No, no.

L.B. So you were with a group, you met a group of young people just before army age.

F.W. Young people, yah, that's right...that's right.

L.B. So you could still have a good time?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Did you have a good time?

F.W. Yah, you go out, you go on trips und things like this.

L.B. Where did you go? Tell us about that.

F.W. Ach, uh, on the Taunus, there are mountains, there's a big mountain, und...

L.B. What mountain is that?

F.W. Taunus.

L.B. How do you spell the name? Ooh, it's hard.

F.W. T-a-u-n-u-s.

L.B. Taunus?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Near Frankfurt?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Uh huh.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. You would go mountain-climbing?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Yah.

F.W. Yah, there, und...like, like, uh, the young people go together, too, you know, for boys and girls together.

L.B. Now, were these Jewish boys and girls?

F.W. Yah, only Jewish boys and girls.

L.B. Only Jewish boys and girls.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Was it ever considered that you could, or might, go with a boy that wasn't Jewish?

F.W. No, it was not considered, in, not, this were in Wieckersheim, but...I didn't know anybody in, in Hechstert, or in Frankfurt, so, uh...no, besides Jewish boys.

L.B. I know, but what I'm asking...

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(Tape ends)

Side 2

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L.B. See, like if you remember any funny stories, or things that happened to you, that's, you know, this way you, you sound as if you want to say the proper thing and the correct thing.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. There is no correct thing to say, it's only what you remember, you know...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. ...of, of those times. Now, we're talking about before the First World War.

F.W. War, yah.

L.B. And, a lot of things changed after the War.

F.W. That's right. No, we are, uh, as Jews, we have no, uh...we don't know any different, we were....together mit the other people, mit the non-Jewish people, and...we were no, no different.

L.B. Not in Frankfurt, and not in Weickersheim?

F.W. Especially in Weickersheim.

L.B. Especially in Weickersshiem?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. What about in Frankfurt, was there a difference there?

F.W. No, I have no connection with other people, see.

L.B. Uh huh, right.

F.W. That's it.

L.B. I see. Now, in Weickersheim, let's go back for a minute, you went to school there for so many years, you were born there, your family lived there. Did you have other family there, besides your mother and father, in Weickersheim?

F.W. Yah, I have, uh...

L.B. Cousins, you said?

F.W. Yah, uncle, aunt und unc..unc...uncle, und cousins.

L.B. Now, your, did you have girlfriends besides your sister?

F.W. Yah...yah, yah, yah.

L.B. Now, were these girlfriends, then, they were not Jewish?

F.W. No, no.

L.B. Did they come to your home?

F.W. They come to our home, and I go to this home. We were very...close together. In the evening, when I, it was time to get home, my parents always have to look for me. (laughter).

L.B. How did they find you? I used to ring a bell from the front door.

F.W. They know I was...

L.B. A cowbell.

F.W. They know I was with, uh, I have 3 girlfriends, uh, uh...I had 3 girlfriends, we were very close together.

L.B. So you were in, in one of their homes.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And how did you spend your time with them?

F.W. Playing.

L.B. What kind of games did you play?

F.W. We had, uh...dolls und....like the, the kids here, too, uh, like children here, too. We were playing outdoors, und...

L.B. Yah.

F.W. ...we were together. So, it was very nice.

L.B. It was nice?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Were you outdoors a good deal of the time?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. You were?

F.W. Yah. Small town...

L.B. Yes.

F.W. Not much to do.

L.B. Yes.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Mm hm.

L.B. And, um...in the home, did your mother have help?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. She did?

F.W. She had a maid, yah.

L.B. Did she live in?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. So she had to live in one of the rooms, upstairs.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. Did she sleep in the kitchen?

F.W. Oh no.

L.B. No.

F.W. We have a special room for her.

L.B. She had a special room.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Did you 3 girls, your sisters, did you share a bed...a bedroom, or did you each have room?

F.W. No, 2 have a room, my younger sister and I...

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Und, my older sister, she had a room for herself.

L.B. I see.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Now, your older sister was a year older. Let me see, I want to, I want to follow some...Robyn, am I getting off the, um, I want to keep on the, um...

R.K. Mm...

L.B. ...chronological track, here, and at the same time...let me see if I can find...here we go...

F.W. It's too bad my son-in-law is not here. He can tell you lots of things more as I can tell you. He's down in New York.

L.B. Well, maybe some time...

F.W. Um, Gloria met him in Florida.

L.B. Yes, that's right, she told me.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. But that's, that's fine. Now tell me, ahh...your mother observed kashruth, then?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. Now what did you speak in the home, what language?

F.W. German.

L.B. You spoke German?

F.W. Yah. (Pause). Not Yiddish.

L.B. Not Yiddish, no.

F.W. No. We didn't know this.

L.B. Did your father talk to you about, uh, or, or was there conversation in the home, about Jews in other parts of the world? Were they concerned about Jews in other parts of the world?

F.W. Yah. You know, uh, from Poland come lots of poor Jews, and...they go to Jewish family, and you give them some....charity, you know, you give them some money or you let them sleep overnight in one of your place. Und, I think this were when the pogroms were in Poland.

L.B. Mm.

F.W. I see them today, coming with the, uh...mit the....kindlewagon, was has, kindewagon, as English?

63 L.B. Umlachen?

F.W. Wagon, kindewagon.

L.B. Oh, a wagon, a wagon.

F.W. Yah, uh...kindewagon, where the babies are in, where the babies are lying...

L.B. Kindewagon...

R.K. A baby carriage.

L.B. A baby carriage.

F.W. Baby...carriage, yah.

L.B. Ahhh, yeah.

F.W. Uh, they coming, und asking for....help, to help them.

L.B. What year was this? Do you remember? Was it after the War started?

F.W. (Long pause). No, I think this was before, before the War.

L.B. Before the War?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. They were leaving Poland.

F.W. Yah, there were the pogro...pogroms...

L.B. Yah.

75 F.W. ...in Poland, und they were coming, so many, so many. Und,!

L.B. Uh huh.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And they came through your town, they came through Weickersheim, then?

F.W. Weickersheim, yah. Und, they were, uh, I mean, there were...lots of more in the section around Weickersheim, where Jewish family live, you know, lots of more towns, bigger one and smaller one, und...there they come out and....ask for help.

L.B. Did they settle down there?

F.W. No, no.

L.B. They moved on?

F.W. Moved on.

L.B. Do you know where they were going?

F.W. No, no.

L.B. How, um, how did the German Jews, you know, that you knew, or did, did you hear how your father<sup>1</sup> talked about these people?

F.W. We feel sorry for them, you know. We don't know later on we have to get through the same thing, when Hitler was there.

L.B. Well, that's later.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. But, at the time, that didn't, uh, no, nobody...

F.W. No, nobody knows, no, no, no...

L.B. No. Nobody knows. So, the, your feeling was that, um, these people were helped...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. ...by the German Jews?

F.W. Oh yah, oh yah. Nobody go out without giving them anything.

L.B. Did they, how did they know where to go? How did they know where a Jewish home was?

F.W. That's, I asked myself, too.

L.B. You did? (Laughter).

F.W. That's what I asked myself, too. They come from one, from one place to the other one, the...I, I guess maybe, they're recommended to go there or there, or... So...I had a man coming through our place. He was a, a...he wasn't...nothing, had not much money, and he only went to my family and my...the, my husband's family, und, uh...another family. To the other Jews he don't went, he, he get enough there. He was very well-educated, but he was...poor, you know.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Yah. I get a, a prayer...prayerbook from him, in German. Und he...I will show you...

L.B. Yah. Turn off...

(Tape off) (Gets prayerbook)

F.W. ...German...you know, for all occasion prayerbooks.

L.B. Yes.

107 F.W. Und he wrote this there.

"I shall read more often, very often, this. From, und in memory...of..." That, that's his name, this from 1924.

L.B. Oh, that's quite late, that's after the First War, then.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. Oh, is that when the refugees came through, you think, about 1924?

F.W. The refugees went through?

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. No, this was before...the refugees.

L.B. Oh, but this man just happened to come through in 1924?

F.W. Yah, yah, yah. He was not a Polish man.

L.B. Oh, he was not?

F.W. No, no, no.

L.B. What was he?

F.W. German. He was poor, but he was, uh...so good manners he has, he was so.... well<sup>10</sup>-educated, und he was so nice in every way. Und, he was poor...I don't know...

L.B. Mm. So he gave you this prayerbook?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Now he was not, then, running from a pogrom?

F.W. No.

L.B. No.

F.W. No, no.

L.B. He was just on the road.

F.W. On the road, yah.

L.B. I see. All right, so we take you back to Frankfurt...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And it's during the War, and you're meeting young people.

F.W. Yah.



L.B. And you're working in the store. And then, apparently, your father died.

F.W. Oh, I have to be called home, my father was very sick, and I have to leave there, and have to go home.

L.B. What year was that?

F.W. This was 1920.

L.B. In 1920. So the War was already over.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Now, a lot of things happened in Germany after the War.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Were you aware of any of the things that happened?

F.W. Yah, we had, uh...then come the inflation.

L.B. The inflation.

F.W. We had no money anymore. The farmer, all the people buy all the, the...stuff you had in your store. When you go the next day, or you want, uh, you know, you want buy something, for this money you cannot get anything anymore. We are... getting poor, too, you know.

L.B. Mm hm.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Now, you were there from 1915, you were in, in, um...Frankfurt from 1915 to 1920, right?

F.W. Yah, yah.

(Voice from outside calls Mrs. Wolfsheimer. Tape off).

L.B. ...waiting for it to pop up again. Let's see if it pops up.

R.K. No, it's turning.

L.B. It's turning. All right, now you, we were talking about your 5 years in Frankfurt, from 1915 until 1920.

F.W. No, uh, I was, meantime I was home, uh...staying home, I was not all the time in Frankfurt.

L.B. No?

F.W. No, no.

L.B. Did you go home, for what reason?

F.W. For visits, visit.

L.B. Oh yeah.

F.W. Yeah, for visits, so it was, was not...a couple of months home, then, you know, I don't, I don't get paid so, and I don't, I was not going out for money, for making money, in the old country, you know...uh, to my relatives in Hecht. I just, to see people, and to learn something.

L.B. So you were not getting paid there?

F.W. No, no.

L.B. Actually, I'm going to ask you. Was the real purpose to find a husband?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Yeah. (Laughter). It's a good reason.

F.W. I was not, I was not too young, I was not too young.

L.B. Well, let's see how old you were, 18 when you went there, right?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. Did you meet a husband there?

F.W. I meet some people there, but nothing...

L.B. Nothing developed.

F.W. No, no.

L.B. Well, you obviously got married.

F.W. Yah, I married a man from...Weickersheim, itself.

L.B. Isn't that funny, you had to go back home then. (Laughter).

F.W. Yah, yah, yah...

L.B. How old were you when you married, then?

F.W. How old I was? 26.

L.B. 26.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And you, so, now let's see...fif...1915, oh quick...

R.K. What?

L.B. I'm trying to figure out years. In 19...1897, 1920, you were...  
R.K. ...23...  
L.B. ...wait a minute, no, no...  
R.K. She was...  
L.B. That's not right.  
R.K. 1897, she was...  
L.B. Oh, '97.  
R.K. She was 18 when...You were 18 when you went to Frankfurt?  
F.W. About 18, yeah.  
R.K. Yeah...  
L.B. So that you were...  
R.K. ...in 1915, and in 1923...  
L.B. So you...no...  
R.K. ...you were married?  
L.B. ...she was 20...  
F.W. No.  
L.B. No, she was 23 when she, uh, went back to Weickersheim.  
F.W. Yah, yah, yah...  
L.B. You were 23, right?  
F.W. ...yah, yah, yah.  
L.B. All right. Now, so during that time, you were dating, and going places?  
F.W. Yah, well, at home and in the store, whatever, whatever it was to do there, you know?  
L.B. But a, a young girl was not supposed to work for money?  
F.W. No.....They were saying, "This is no good when you...", this was much different as I were here...Uh, "This were no good when you get, uh, work for money. This is, uh....you know, when you get married this is, uh.....no, this were no good when you work for money."  
L.B. In other words, if you worked for money...then, when you went to get married it was counted against you?  
F.W. Yah, that's it.  
L.B. It was like a black mark against you.  
F.W. Yah.  
L.B. That you had to work for money.  
F.W. Yah.  
L.B. Is that right?  
F.W. Yah, yah.  
L.B. That a woman should not have to work for money...  
F.W. That's right.  
L.B. ...to be a good wife.  
F.W. That's right.  
L.B. Why is that? Do you know?  
F.W. I don't know. This was much different, you know, und...in Germany, when you get married, a Jewish girl and get married, you have to have money. She has...  
L.B. A dowry.  
F.W. She has to bring the, the money. It was not like here...?  
L.B. She had to bring a dowry, therefore, if your father had money you were more apt, you, you were, you had a better chance to get a good husband, than if your father did not have money?  
F.W. That's right, that's right....that's right.  
L.B. Now, how was your father? Was he comfortably...did he have enough money to provide for his daughters?  
F.W. Yah, he had enough money, but we lost ev...everything in the inflation.  
L.B. Aaah.  
F.W. Everything goes....we had to start a, a new life again.  
L.B. In what year was that?  
F.W. This was '24.  
L.B. 1924.  
F.W. '24, '24, '25, was the inflation.

L.B. But your father died in what year?

F.W. '20.

L.B. In 1920. How did the War, how did he survive the War? In, did he stay in the store during those years?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. He was not called into the army?

F.W. No, he was not, in the German, in the, in the...

L.B. No...yeah.

F.W. No...not old enough.

L.B. He was too old.

F.W. Too old, yah.

L.B. Right.

F.W. Excuse me.

L.B. Right. He was too old to go into the army, so he stayed in his store...

F.W. Yah, but he did some, uh...volunteer work, you know, for, uh...He watched the bridges and things, and...

R.K. Home guard.

F.W. Yah, something like that.

L.B. Now, as Jewish, uh, Orthodox Jews living in Germany, um.....uh, how did you feel about the Kaiser? Was there a picture of him in your home? Or, you know, did you feel, um...patriotic towards him?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. You did.

F.W. Very, very patriotic. Yah, one time the.....Emperess, that's the Kaiserine, the Emperess...

L.B. Right, right.

F.W. Emperess come in our city, when I was in school. Und, we had to stand...  
227 , uh, und we had to sing...

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. ...to sing for her, unund have flag<sup>s</sup>, und wave flag<sup>s</sup> und things like that.

L.B. Right.

230 F.W. And we had a big, uh, 'kastelwar in, in Weickersheim.

L.B. A castle?

F.W. A castle, yah.

L.B. Yah?

F.W. Yah. Und, it's very well-known, very, uh, very well-known. From Bad Mergentheim all the people who were to...li..staying there, you know, for a cure, und they coming, und this were open for public to...you can see the kastel insides... Everything was in Baroque style, und, uh, very an..antique.

L.B. Now, did, did the Kaiser and the Kaiserine stay in, in this kastel when they came?

F.W. They were visit..visiting there.

L.B. Oh.

F.W. Visiting there.

L.B. Was there someone living in this, uh, place?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Who lived there? Do you know?

243 F.W. ?

R.K. Wow!

L.B. Wow. (Laughter). That's hard for an \*American to, to say, yeah. Now, Forst...

F.W. Feerst.

L.B. Feerst.

F.W. This is a...

L.B. A title.

F.W. Like a barone, barone...baron.

R.K. A baron.

L.B. A baron. Ohhh, so this was his home?

F.W. This was his home. Und he has a home, uh, not far away from Weickersheim, und there he was living, stayed he there. Only certain times in the year, he come und live there. Und then, when he was not there, it was open to visit and to see, uh, the...

L.B. Did you ever go?

F.W. Oh yah...

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. ...oh, often. I was, uh, I was, uh....uh...filming. There was a big, uh, big, uh...salle, how you call "salle" in English? A big rittesalle, a big place in the schloss.

L.B. A writer's, a rider's...a rittesalle...

F.W. A big, uh...

L.B. Like a circle?

F.W. No, no, a big place, and there were a film company, und...that's when I went to school in Mergentheim. Und, we were, were taking picture, and we were dancing, und then we were...

R.K. For a movie?

F.W. For a movie,yah.

R.K. You were in a movie?

F.W. Yah.

R.K. (Laughter). What's the name of the movie?

L.B. (Laughing). What was the name of the movie?

F.W. I don't know.

L.B. Ohh...(Laughter).

F.W. [REDACTED] in Weickersheim.

Rittesalle

L.B. Rittesalle in Weickersheim?

F.W. Weickersheim, Schloss Weickersheim, yah.

L.B. Schloss is a castle, isn't it?

F.W. Castle, yah.

L.B. Yah.

267 F.W. Yah. There we were dancing und...?

R.K. Was, it was a ballroom? Where they hold...

F.W. A ballroom...

R.K. ...where they hold, uh, huge parties.

F.W. Yah, yah.

R.K. And you were dancing...

F.W. Yah, yah...

R.K. You were extras in the movie.

L.B. Oh, I see.

F.W. Yah.

R.K. Wow, that's really exciting.

L.B. Rittershalle, oh, "halle", it would be a hall.

F.W. Salle, salle.

L.B. Salle, rittersalle, that's French.

R.K. Like salon.

F.W. No, no, not saloon, no.

L.B. Salle is a room. No?

R.K. No, no, salon...it, it's a, it's a...

F.W. No, like a ballroom...

R.K. Like a ballroom, right.

F.W. ...a big, big room. Und there were all the...pictures of the...of the barones there, you know...

R.K. His family?

F.W. His family...

R.K. All the way, going back.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. And you were there?

F.W. We were dancing there.

L.B. And how old were you then, do you remember?

F.W. 15, 16 years old.

L.B. Yeah, oh it must have been exciting.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Yah. (Pause). Now, when you came back home to Weickersheim, in 1920, your father was ill?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Right?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And, then what happened, in Weickersheim?

F.W. Yah, then came the...I was only working in the store, you know, household, so...und, we had no maid anymore, this time, when we were grown up. Und...had big gardens, where you keep yourself busy, we were growing our own Vegetable und...

L.B. You did?

F.W. ...fruits, und we were busy there. Und I, later on I get married.

L.B. Now, your father died...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. ...in 1920?

F.W. '20, yah.

L.B. Did your mother keep the store going?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. She did?

F.W. Mm hm, mit us, yah.

L.B. How many of you girls were still home?

F.W. 2, my older sister, she was in Frankfurt, too, but not the same place I was, in ano...other relatives.

L.B. Mm hm.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And, which 2 were home, the older sister and you?

F.W. The, the youngest.

L.B. What about the older sister, did she get married in Frankfurt?

F.W. No, she get married, uh...she met somebody, but she get married in.....home, und, uh, uh, in our place.

L.B. Where did she live then?

F.W. She lives in Laudенbach.

L.B. How do you spell it? L-a...

F.W. L-a-u-d-e-n...

L.B. n-bach.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. In Laudенbach. Was that near you?

F.W. Uuuhhh....an hour und a half, with a car to drive.

L.B. Uh huh. By this time, now, you say in 1924 you were wiped out.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. You kept the store going until 1924...

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. And then, you say you were wiped out.

F.W. That's right.

L.B. And then you had to start over.

F.W. Over again, yah.

L.B. Did you start with the same business? That was...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. ...again, just your mother and the 2 women?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. Or were you already married by this time?

F.W. No, I were married later. (Pause). Yeah.

L.B. Now, what year were you married?

F.W. In Weickersheim.

L.B. What year?

F.W. Twenty...

L.B. Seven?

F.W. I don't know, it was '27, or was '28. I were not young anymore when I get married.

L.B. Well, you certainly weren't old.

F.W. No, not, uh...

L.B. But...

F.W. ...not young either. (Laughs).

L.B. Huh? Well, uh, in those, you were expected, what age were you expected to get married?

F.W. In the old country you get married not so young as over here. I know, my older sister, she was one, uh, one time with my father in Frankfurt for shopping, you know, for, for the store. Und there was a sale, like wholesale, you know.

L.B. Mm hm.

F.W. Und, uh, she was pretty. Und, uh, a young man...all of a sudden come up to her, ask her if she want marry him. (Laughter).

R.K. A stranger? (Laughter).

L.B. A stranger?

F.W. A stranger, yah. An uncle, an uncle was mit, an uncle was mit, he asked the uncle if the, the girl want marry him. My father ask her, "Julie you want him, you want marry him?" He says, "No, you be, ~~am~~nacht, too young." And she was...

L.B. She was still too young.

F.W. She was nearly 22 already.

L.B. Uh huh.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. So, how old would you say, uh, uh, Jewish, German Jewish women were, usually?

F.W. 24, 25...und the man have be 28, 30.

L.B. 28 to 30. That's what Mr. Lowen told us.

F.W. Yeah.

L.B. That you ha...the, the men had to be at least about 30.

F.W. 30, yah.

L.B. So they waited until they were established.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Hm. That's very interesting. So you stayed home, now, how did your mother manage to recoup, to get back on her feet in the business?

F.W. Oh, my younger sister, she was a good business, she were good in business, my younger sister.

L.B. She was?

F.W. Yah, she...she did all the...she'd go to Wirtsburg, this was the closest, uh, for us, for where you buy wholesale, you know, by the wholesale dealer. Yah.

L.B. So you managed.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And, you had a...enough...

F.W. Und then we had, uh...ground, you know, uh...we had, uh, how you say, in English, we had, uh...(Long pause)...acres, uh...

L.B. Acres, land.

F.W. Land, land, land, yah.

L.B. Land. And what did you do? Did you rent it or did you farm it?

F.W. We farm it. My father always used to say, "Don't sell, don't, don't sell your, your acres. The, that's, can the, Frenchmen cannot take this with them." You know, in the War...

L.B. Oh...(Laughter)...In other words, they could take your money, but they couldn't take your land. (Laughter).

F.W. Couldn't take the land, that's right.

L.B. Oh, he was afraid of the French?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. He didn't like the French, your father?

F.W. I don't say he don't like them, but you know...

L.B. Yah, but that was the expression.

F.W. Expression, yah.

L.B. Oh, that's very interesting. "Don't sell your land, the Frenchmen can't take it with them." (Laughter).

F.W. They cannot this mit, mit, mit them, yah.

L.B. How did you feel about the Russians?

F.W. We had...

L.B. In, in those days. Did you hear about the Revolution that took place after the War, of during the War?

F.W. No, no, no...

L.B. You didn't hear that? You didn't hear that...

F.W. Hear, hear, but we have no interest in the Russians. (Long pause). Yah.

L.B. How did you meet your husband, Mrs. Wolfsheimer?

F.W. I meet my husband in, in Weickersheim. He was a widower.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Und, we were.....after meeting him, I, uh, his wife passed away, 3 years after he come und ask my mother...for...

L.B. He asked you mother?

F.W. First, yah.

L.B. First, if he could marry...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. ...if he could speak to you?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. So you found a husband in Wieckersheim?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. You didn't have to go to Frankfurt. (Laughs).

F.W. NO, no.

L.B. And, um, then you married, and where did you live then?

F.W. In Weickersheim.

L.B. And he was living in Weickersheim.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Did he have a business there?

F.W. Yah, he has a big business, a wholesale, all the grain...hay...

L.B. Oh, he was the wholesale grain dealer, mm hm.

F.W. Hay, straw, und he, all, uh...he wholesale this to...Switzerland, Italy, und he was big businessman.

L.B. Did he travel a lot?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. Did you go with him?

F.W. The first time, too, but I, I had 2 children from...from, I married 2 children, und then I have to stay home, you know.

L.B. Mm hm.

F.W. 2 bookkeepers, and I have a maid, and have people working in...for him, on the house.

L.B. So you were supervising at home?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. Actually, you were running the home end of the business, then?

F.W. Yah. And I had to, bookkeeper, too...uh...

L.B. You had to supervise the bookkeeper, or did you do the bookkeeping?

F.W. No, we had, uh, supervise the bookkeeper.

L.B. Yeah, but in order to supervise, you have to know bookkeeping.

F.W. Yah, I learned this in, in the convent.

L.B. You did?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. (Pause). Now, i...all right, well...Robyn, um, is there anything that, uh, we should cover? Well, now, let's see, we're, we're up to what year now? 19... you're 27 years old, you're married.....it's about 1924, no, it's later, isn't it? 1924?

R.K. It's after...

F.W. After...

R.K. After the inflation.

F.W. After, after...

L.B. After the inflation?

R.K. Like, '27.

F.W. '27, yah.

L.B. All right, now, what happened to you when Hitler came to power? Were you aware that, in 1933, that he was, his party was, uh, voted in?

F.W. Was, uh, I'll tell you, my husband was a big businessman out there. He travelled a lot, und he, und he had lots of good friends. And one of his friends, he was a....a....

He was on a...he...he told him, "Max...", his name was Max, "...go away. The Nazis are coming, und they have not much good things to...uh, think from them." So, my husband was on a trip, he was not home, anyhow. Und he called me on the...he called me on the phone und he say, he had not his passport mit him. Und he say, "I, I don't go home." A man, was not a Jewish man, uh, uh, he was a....cleric, on, on, on court.

L.B. A court cle...a Catholic?

F.W. A cleric, a cleric, uh, he was on a, on court. Und he told him, "Max, don't go home. Do, you be not alive anymore." Und, so my husband went in...he had good connection mit Switz...Switzerland, and Alsace Lorraine...

L.B. Yes.

F.W. Und, he say, he can go into...Switzerland, Switzerland.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Und, uh, und really, on this Saturday, the Nazis came...the, und ask for my husband.

L.B. They came to Weickersheim?

F.W. Weickersheim, all the places, all, all, ~~the~~ Jews were leaving. Und, they asked, my husband, where he is. Und I don't, I say, "I don't know," und I really don't know it, where he was, because he don't told me.

L.B. Good.

F.W. So, he was in, he was (not) in Germany, Nuremburg. This, I found out this, later, Und...

L.B. He was still in Nuremburg?

F.W. Nuremburg, yah.

L.B. Ach.

F.W. Yah, I had a sister living there. Und, uh, 2 men get, Nazis killed them... for nothing, you know, because they was Jew...

L.B. In Weickersheim? Yeah.

F.W. ...Jews, yah. Und the other one, you get, uh, uh, arrested under the, the mayory, und the...mayor, with the mayor houses, burgermeister, owned...

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Und, uh, get beaten up, und things...All of a sudden they come in my house, too, und they arrested me, too. Mit 2 men, mit...guns, I were escorted in the... thing. I was escorted in the...where the mayor is, you know, in this house where the mayor is in...

L.B. Yes, a mayor.

F.W. Yah, und they want know where my husband is, und they asked me questions und things, I have...then, not to look in his face, I have to look against the wall. I was standing against the wall, und if you can

nothing do to me...they, they make, uh...how you say,?

536

(Tape ends)

Side 3

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F.W. Yah, und they did house-searchings, the whole house, in my place. Und, they arrested me, und, uh...mit, mit the guns in, in...both Nazis, both sides. Und, uh, I have to, they ask me questions, "Where my hus...do you want my husband back. Und....so, after a couple hours, then they let me free. Und my mother, my mother was living, we were living across from the mayory, across from the...you know...

L.B. Mayor's house.

F.W. Mayor's house.

L.B. Right.

F.W. Und they see me coming down mit the 2 men, arrested me. (Mumbles something.) My, a cousin of mine were there, und another man were there. Und they were all blue and black, uh, beaten up....beaten, beaten up. Und, you cannot talk toge... together, you know.



L.B. Mm hm.

F.W. Yah. And then they were watching my telephone, , and my, my husband called, und, uh, found out where he is. But, it was not calling, was my sister-in-law told me then he is in the Swi...in Switzerland. He had good friends there.

L.B. And then you were able to get out...

F.W. Und they confiscated my money.

L.B. They did.

F.W. My money und...it, it was after, with the bank, und, und everything.

L.B. Hm. How did you manage to get out?

F.W. I, how I managed to get out? It took me a whole year. My husband was then in Kolmoff, in...in Kolmar, in...und, uh, he give me, he, a man from Switzerland, he sent me a, a....an engagement for his store, that I can work in his store, he has a cigar store, he had a sto...

L.B. In Kolmar?

F.W. Yah, no this were in Switzerland...

L.B. Right.

F.W. In, in Basl, Basl, yeah. Und he sent me that, so I went. Und I had no passport, I cannot go. So I went down to Bad Mergentheim, there was a court. Und I went for a passport...I cannot go out, they want my husband back. I say, so, then I told them I have no money anymore, I live with my mother. Und, uh, the State had to support me when, when I can't get, take this, uh, the job and... he sent me. Und I showed him, und he has, uh, you know, from the authorities was uh, signed from...from Basl, from, being that is true, that's so, so I can get this job und I can make so much money. Und then, my daughter was home with me, my daughter, she was a kid. Und, my son, I, I, my son, he was in, by his father already.

L.B. Ahh.

F.W. I sent, somebody brought him over in his car, in his car. Und, from Stras... from Kale, nacht Kale, this is the border, nacht Strasbourg. I bought him to Kale, I brought him to Kale, to a friend of my husband, und he brought him in his, in his car to, to my husband nacht...Strasbourg.

L.B. Strasbourg is in Alsace-Lorraine.

F.W. Alsace-Lorraine, yah. This is together, uh, the border, Alsace-Lorraine on the, and...uh...

L.B. Germany?

F.W. No, Switzerland.

L.B. Switzerland?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Oh, I didn't, I have to look at a map again.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. O.K.

R.K. But, where's Kol...Kolmar?

F.W. Kolmar, this is, uh...

L.B. That's in Alsace-Lorraine, too?

F.W. Alsace-Lorraine, yah.

R.K. So that's where he was, at that time?

F.W. That's where he was, and he get a job there right away. He, um, had good friends there, they, taking care of him. Und he was, uh, my son was there. He was bar mitzvah in, in Kolmar. And the people were so nice to him. And the Kolmar Jews don't know that it...happens to them, too. You...

L.B. That's right, I was going to say that.

F.W. Yeah. Later on, 'we' went to Lyon, Lyon, Lyon in...

R.K. Lyon, France, right.

F.W. Lyon in France, and 'we' were living there for 9 years. Und, uh...

L.B. 9?

F.W. Yah, after, uh, Hitler came, you know...

L.B. Oh, so it was 1942 already?

F.W. Yah, '42 we come over here.

L.B. Ohhh.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. From France?

F.W. From...yah. Und, uh...I bring everything together. (Laughs).

L.B. That's all right.

F.W. Und, under.....the people from Kolmar, my daughter

, when we were living there. Und, they, they come from Kolmar... get, uh, driven out, like we were driven out ourselves, I mean...they, I would not believe it, I think they just say so, they told us, I cannot believe it that this happens. Und, this were the same thing happens, but thanks God they getting back on her place, on the houses again, the people from...

L.B. Alsace.

F.W. ...France, from Alsace, yeah.

L.B. Uh, you mean after the War?

F.W. After the War, yah.

L.B. Did they go back there then?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. So, those people who managed to escape at, at all, you mean?

F.W. Yah, yah, yah.

L.B. Got their houses back.

F.W. Und...yah, then, yah, it's, come from one and the other. So, then I went, then I go down and say, "I cannot live anymore, I have no money." Und I just, uh, start, uh, they have to support me.

L.B. Right.

F.W. Then, und this man who give the passport, I remember, my husband give them so much, uh, dida them so much favor during the...during the first World War; you know, giving them food and..., giving? and everything. Und he was the, the worst one. Then finally when I told him I have to be gone, he give me an, finally, a passport.

L.B. He was the worst one?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Why do you think so?

F.W. When I went for a passport, he don't know and they want mine husband back, he want my husband back. (Long pause). I cannot express myself so...

L.B. No.

F.W. ...I can, a book I can write once I get through. And then one time I was in... this were when the bar mitzvah of my son. My husband has a good friend in.... Basl, in Switzerland; und his property is on the border from the German property, uh, together. Und, he was, he brought me over without passport to...that I see, can see my husband, can be on the bar mitzvah from my son.

L.B. Now, this was before you had a passport?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Ohh. So you went to the border...

F.W. Yeah, und he get me...

L.B. And he got you across.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. But you didn't stay then, you went back.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Is that right?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Why?

F.W. I had my daughter there. She was a kid, she was...

L.B. Ahhh. And without a passport you had no safety?

F.W. No, no, no.

L.B. Yeah. But just, you went just to see your son bar mitzvah, and then you went back to your, to your daughter.

F.W. Just to see my husband, yah. Und, had to tell what I have to do, und what I did. We had a big house, a big place. Und...so much things was going on, I cannot tell you...everything.

L.B. And, was your daughter going to school during this time?

F.W. In Wickersheim?

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Yah, well she have to...it was no good anymore.

L.B. No, I know.

F.W. No, no. I, uh, had in France, when I were in Lyon, I had 2 nephews from my, from my sister...her son, and from my husband's, uh, sister, a son. They must have come in '39, to France. Somebody brought them over the border, that they can, why we cannot get into school anymore in Germany. They brought them over, they were living with us in France. Und we sent them from France to Italy, mit, uh,

. They were, the other one was 13, that, my nephew was 10. Thus, he met my sister and my brother-in-law in Genoa, in Italy, und, for coming over here.

L.B. To come here to the United States, you mean?

F.W. Yah, yah.

R.K. Oh, so they came here before you did?

F.W. Yah.

R.K. They were already in the country.

F.W. Yah. (Pause). Uh, und, I were in...concentration camp in, in France, too.

L.B. You were?

F.W. In Curs.

L.B. You were?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. In what town?

F.W. Curs, on the Spanish border.

L.B. That's...

F.W. Curs.

L.B. Is that, is that where the Hirschens were?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. What's, how do you spell that town, do you know?

F.W. C-, C-u-r-s, Curs.

L.B. Curs.

F.W. Where the Hirschens were, yah. (Pause). Und my husband were in another concentration camp. Und we don't know each other is, my husband living or where he is or noth...nothing.

L.B. Now when did this happen? Whe...because you were in Lyon, you say...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. ...for 9 years.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Until '42.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Then when the Germans invaded France...

F.W. Yah, that's right.

L.B. ...that's when you were deported, put into a concentration camp in Southern France?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Is that right?

F.W. Yah, that's right, near the Spanish border.

L.B. Near the Spanish border. And how long were you in the concentration camp?

F.W. 8 months. My daughter was crying for a piece of bread, I give her my part. I was...skinny. (Long pause). And straw, we were laying on straw, und nothing to eat, nothing, not enough to eat. Yeah. My son, he came, in '38 we sent him over here.

L.B. Ah.

F.W. Und...when, um.....First, the French was very nice and good to us. Then, once it's going bad, then..we are not good anymore, too, you know.

L.B. Mm hm.

F.W. Yeah.

L.B. (Pause). How did you, how were you able to get out of the French concentration camps?

F.W. We had a, a apartment. The people who have their own apartment in France, the....let go out. Only the people who have not their own place to live there, they have to stay there. I have a, see, I was in Lyon, and I have apartment there, and that's the reason we can get out. But my, all my money was confiscated in France, too.

L.B. Yes.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Did you have a job, work, in Lyon?

F.W. I, yah, house..housework.

L.B. You did housework.

F.W. Housework.

L.B. And what did your husband do there?

F.W. He sell bread. We go from one Jewish, that's, Jew...Jewish families, and sell bread. Und....like this, yah.

L.B. Whatever you could.

F.W. Yah. Hard.

L.B. Yes. Was your mother able to come with you?

F.W. No, my mother, since, she passed away '36. My younger sister wound up in Weickersheim. Und my mother were in '36; und my younger sister, in '38, she went, the last...minute she went out of Germany.

L.B. So...your sisters all left?

F.W. Yah. Und the, the little boy I had, my, my, my nephew, he went to Italy, this were the last...

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. ...the last boat to go out of Italy. Und, we sent him over there. Und my, and on the Swi...Swiss border, my, my, my husband has a...business friend. Und we called him up from, from France and told him that the 2 boys are coming to Genoa. Und he... thus he passed them, the border. Und he, then he sent us a telegram und say, uh, "Moisyeh Kauffman, Moisyeh Becher passed the border, und they are safe in Italy." Then the HIAS, or the...HIAS took over and brought them to the ship.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Everybody was crying, when, "Mama, mama...."you know, the boy called, he recognized his mother, und he called her...I did housework in France, yah. (Very long pause). I want show you some pictures. (Tape off). Und, uh...

L.B. Now, wait a minute, you were working in Lyon...

F.W. Yeah.

L.B. ...for the president of the Jewish community?

F.W. In household, by the lady, you know, by the Mrs. Und, uh...I found out, see, she and the 3 children get, from the Nazis, killed.

L.B. In Lyon?

F.W. In Lyon, yah. This were after, I mean, it was...

L.B. After you left Lyon?

F.W. Left, yah.

(Long pause. Tape off. F.W. returns with photographs.)

L.B. ...this house?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Was, was the lower floor the business?

192 F.W. No, he had nothing... here, everything wholesale, everything? Uh, uh, see, he bought everything by wholesale, potatoes by the wagon...

L.B. Yeah.

193 F.W. Und, he bought them by the wagon, und he sold them by wagon, nothing, nothing, uh... , um, we used to say.

L.B. You, so you didn't have to store any of this?

F.W. No, no, this, no store.

L.B. So you lived in this whole house?

F.W. No, we lived...all, there, all this were rented, we had friends living...

L.B. On one end?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And then you rented one, the other end?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Oh, I see.

R.K. To one other family?

F.W. Yah.

R.K. Or several?

F.W. Several families.

R.K. Several families.

F.W. Several families.

L.B. Oh, I see.

F.W. (Pointing to another photograph). That's my granddaughter.

R.K. The one that's in Israel?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. She looks like quite a kid. (Laughs). That's all right. (Pause, another photo). Where's this, in Washington Heights?

F.W. Yah, I guess so.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Yah. (Long pause. Another photo). That's my older sister and her husband.

L.B. Very sweet-looking woman. (Long pause). How did you feel, you got as far south, you went from Alsace-Lorraine.....to Lyon, right?

F.W. Yah. We had, uh, , we had to go, we cannot live near the... uh, near the border anymore, we had to go. Und everybody say, "You go, und, uh, you don't live. You, you cannot make a living there because you don't know the language and you don't know this-and-this." Und, thanks God, nach...thanks God we made it.

R.K. Did, did you, you learned French?

F.W. I learned French in the Catholic convent.

R.K. Oh, oh, very good.

L.B. Ohhh, how marvelous. (Laughter).

F.W. I, I had, I had the privilege to learn English or the French, and I was never thinking I'd come in America. So I learned, I liked French the, the best.

L.B. Isn't that interesting.

R.K. You really learned a lot of very useful things there.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Yes, you did.

R.K. You learned bookkeeping, and French...

F.W. Bookkeeping, everything.

L.B. No, the, the notion about convents is very mistaken, I think, about a lot of things. And there was no, uh, question, uh, in your convent about Jew or not-Jew?

F.W. No.

L.B. If you wanted to go to school there, you went.

F.W. Yah, oh yah, yah.

L.B. Yeah. Because, I, there was another lady we interviewed who went to school in a convent school.

F.W. (Showing another photo). This is our part from the house. I just want to show you the...(Shuffles through some photos). This is my son.

L.B. Ah hah. This is the one that, uh, Gloria met?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. So that was your son-in-law.

F.W. No, that's my son-in-law.

L.B. Where is your son now?

F.W. In California.

L.B. Ah.

F.W. (Long pause). That's my mother and my old...my younger sister, that's from the old country.

R.K. Oh.

F.W. This is home.

L.B. Oh, you know, this, you look like your younger sister.

F.W. Yah, we look alike. (Very long pause). This is our part from the house.

R.K. Ah. What, what does that say, on the front there?

F.W. This were, uh, uh, a gasthouse.

L.B. Inn, inn, like a guesthouse.

R.K. Uh huh, uh huh.

F.W. Yah. But my, my husband had never, he had rented, this was just, uh, before he, when he bought the place.

R.K. Oh, so he rented them as apartments, not, not like a hotel?

F.W. No.

R.K. People lived there.

F.W. Lived there.

L.B. Oh, The Guesthouse of the Golden Star, right?

F.W. That's right.

L.B. Right. (Pause) Right.

F.W. I want show you that...(Long pause). This, my daughter.

R.K. That's a nice picture.

F.W. This made in France.

L.B. Ahhh.

F.W. This is my husband in the German army.

L.B. Oh, he was in the army.

F.W. 9 years.

R.K. 9 years in the army!

L.B. He was in the army...Oh, my god...Look at that...(Incredible, undescrivable part photograph, part illustration, gold-framed portraits of a man in uniform.)

R.K. Look at those...

L.B. Is there any way, if I, if I could get someone to come and take pictures of these pictures, to copy them, would you mind? Is it possible?

F.W. Oh, I...

L.B. You wouldn't like that?

F.W. No.

L.B. O.K.

F.W.?

R.K. It's a little bit, specially finished.

L.B. It's almost, looks as if he was behind something, or...

F.W. He was 3 years active as a soldier, und...he was 4 years in the...War, first World War. Und he has 2, uh, reputation, uh, to make.

L.B. 2 medals?

F.W. No. Yah, he has the, the Cross, uh...

L.B. Iron Cross?

F.W. Iron Cross, und...uh, nacht, 2 medals, for good behavior, und things like this. That's when we were married.

L.B. Was your husband an Orthodox Jew, also?

F.W. He was...he know everything, but, you know, he was travelling, so...

R.K. (Looking at a photo). That's your daughter and her husband?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. So he didn't observe as much as your father did?

F.W. No, no, no.

L.B. Hm. But he was educated in....the traditional way?

F.W. Yah. Uh, his mother were very religious.

L.B. His mother was very religious.

F.W. Very religious, yah.

L.B. Who are these? Isn't that interes...

F.W. My parents.

L.B. Your parents. Ahhh. (Pause). And this is your daughter...and her husband?

F.W. And her husband, yah.

L.B. Ah, that's nice.

F.W. That's when the children are...

R.K. Oh, yeah.

F.W. ...small. (Very long pause, looking at photographs)

L.B. She's got the bracelet up on her arm here. (Laughs). You see...

F.W. Yah, yah...

L.B. ...how they wear that, the bracelet, up so high?

F.W. Yah. (Another photo). This were down...downtown. We had a room and boarding house downtown.

R.K. Downtown, in Schenectady?

F.W. On Seward Place.

R.K. Uh huh, yes.

F.W. Across from the...

L.B. Oh, did you run a boardinghouse down there?

F.W. Across from the library.

L.B. Mm hm.

F.W. Yah. Across from the library.

L.B. And you rented rooms to students?

F.W. Yah, first I had students, the Kappa Nu were our...

L.B. Oh.

F.W. ...were our first boys. (Laughs).

R.K. A fraternity. (Laughs).

F.W. Fraternities were our first boys, the Kappa Nu...

L.B. Yeah.

F.K. Und then, after, you know they have to go in the War. Und then we had, uh, engineers from General Electric.

L.B. And you, you and your husband did this together?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. You know, think how many changes you have had to make.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. From, you were brought up as a woman that was not expected to do anything except be married.

F.W. That's right, that's right.

L.B. (Long pause). I must say, you're an extraordinary woman.

F.W. Go through lots of things. If I...can write a book, I would.

L.B. Well, you could tell us some of the things instead of writing a book. It's easier.

F.W. (Long pause, shuffling through photos). This is home, this were my place. This were my house, our house, home.

R.K. This is in...

F.W. In Germany. This is my mother, this is my, cousin of mine, this is an uncle of mine, this, this is my husband, this is myself, sister of mine, und, und my daughter.

R.K. Mm hm, the little one.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. (Long pause). This is a picture...

L.B. This is in front of your house?

F.W. This is my house.

L.B. Your parents' house.

F.W. Parents' house, yah.

L.B. That is quite a solid building.

F.W. You said it. Und this go right back in the, on the side, you know, big house.

L.B. Yeah?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Look at that, look at the, the, um...

F.W. Stone...mm, yah.

L.B. ...thickness of the walls, yeah. Oh, that, yeah, you had 2, this is a darling picture, yeah.

F.W. This is when the kids are...

L.B. Oh, look at that. (Laughter). That's really cute.

R.K. That's great. He has a pipe.

L.B. He's a what?

R.K. He has a pipe.

L.B. That's right. That's sweet.

F.W. That was funny...

L.B. Mrs. Wolfsheimer?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. When you were in Alsace-Lorraine....

F.W. Yah.

L.B. You got there....in what year, about '38?

F.W. Yah, no, before.

L.B. No, before.

F.W. Before, before.

L.B. You say your husband got out in '33.

F.W. My husband got out '33, the 24th of March, '33, when the Hitler come on the....scene...

L.B. And it took you a year to get a passport.

F.W. A, a year to get a passport.

L.B. So you were out in '34.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. Is that correct?

F.W. About, yah, about, yah.

L.B. About?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. And, in '34 you went to Alsace-Lorraine. Is that correct?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Now, did you work in the cigar store there?

F.W. In...

L.B. Kolmar?

F.W. No, my, I worked, I did some...you know, helping out with housework. You have not the...permission to work...in Fra...

L.B. Working per..visa.

F.W. Work, no, not in France either. Only housework you can do.

L.B. I see.

F.W. So, I was scared to do this.

L.B. That's right.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. So you did that in Alsace-Lorraine.

F.W. Und in France.

L.B. Yeah. Now, how long did you stay in Alsace-Lorraine?

F.W. In Alsace-Lorraine? Wait a minute. When the German...before the German occupied France. 9 years we were in the , 9 years.

L.B. '34, yeah, but then....it's a question of when, because the War didn't start til 1939. Now, did you...that's when they invaded Poland, the Germans.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. Now, did you stay in Alsace-Lorraine until '39, until the War started?

F.W. No, before, before.

L.B. You left before then?

F.W. Before, yah. We had, uh, 'refouillement we called this in French; we had, uh, to go in the....center, in the mid., in the middle from France or somewhere else, we cannot stay on the border anymore.

L.B. Ohh.

F.W. We're too close to the border, we cannot stay anymore, because we were...refugee.

R.K. Yes.

L.B. Yes.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. So, did you choose Lyon, or did they send you to Lyon?

F.W. No, we chose Lyon. Paris, we don't want go...

L.B. Right.

F.W. ...this was too big for us, and...so...

L.B. Why did you pick Lyon?

F.W. Friends of my husband were there already.

L.B. Ach.



F.W. Yah.

L.B. So you...

F.W. He had, he had a....bou..boucherie. What is boucherie in Fren..what is boucherie in English? Uhh...

L.B. Boucherie? (ause). Bouboucherie?

F.W. Meat and sausage and things like...

L.B. Oh, a butcherie, a butcher.

F.W. In French it's boucherie, yeah, yah.

L.B. Uh huh.

F.W. Und he were there already, und so we were thinking, "O.K., maybe...we're going there, too." So, und then some more families come over there.

R.K. So, you, you collected a community?

L.B. There was a community there?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. And then you picked up work, working?

F.W. And I worked, yah, I worked for the...for the president from the Jewish Community Center, and my husband, he sell bread, he sell...then I'd make, uh, confitière. What do you call this in English? Uh, jam or jelly. He brought this on the marché, on the mar..on the market, there were big marchés. Und I cooked it and he sell this, you know, things like this.

L.B. Yes.

F.W. We were, many times we were glad to have a, a half a....a half a pint of milk, I bought, nu, for the children, that they have some milk, or for the coffee. Und my husband and me, ma..many, many times we eat only black...bread.

L.B. Mm hm.

F.W. White bread, you have in France, no black bread.

L.B. No black bread.

F.W. No.

L.B. How were, ho..what was the attitude of the French...local people, toward you?

F.W. The people was very nice. But when the, then, you know, when it gets bad for the French, when they see the German took everything out of France...We were living near, uh, near the railroad, uh, station. Und, you see all the...the big trucks go by mit food und all this goes to Germany, then they were mad on us. You know?

L.B. They, oh, because you were the closest thing they could be angry at.

F.W. Yah, that's right, that's right. Und they were mad on us.

L.B. How did, how did they show it?

F.W. It showed. One time they send a controller over and say, we had lots of, uh...conserves, lo..lo..lots of, uh...how do you say...uh...lots of...labensmittle... uh, lots of...

L.B. "Laben" is "Life", no?

F.W. Yah, what you eat, lots of conserves in the house...

L.B. Jams.

F.W. Jams, und all...all...

L.B. Jellies, yeah.

F.W. Everything...

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. We had lots things, and when we came we had nothing in the house. This, uh, we had nothing in the house, und...this were our best, our best friends were our shoemaker. Und, uh...we had nothing in the house, he can nothing do. My husband brought home the potatoes in his pocket, in his pants. This were after we come back from the concentration camp. We had nothing to eat there either.

L.B. But, you mean that the French authorities sent into your apartment to see whether you were saving food?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Is that, hording food?

F.W. Yah, but somebody told them, not from themself, not the French author..from himself, but somebody told him. Yah. The, the authority were good, they say, "What, what you waiting for?" You know, we have to wait for our visas so long in France.

L.B. Ohh.

F.W. They say, "What, you don't go out. You don't know the German are coming. You don't know the German are coming."

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. They were very nice to us.

L.B. That's what the Hirschens said, too. Isn't that right?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. That they were well-treated.

F.W. Yah. They were very nice to us.

L.B. Uh, I mean, after they got out of the concentration camp.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. Yeah. (pause). Do you think there's anything else? I don't, you know, I don't want to leave you upset.

F.W. No, no...

L.B. No.

F.W.

But, uh....but, was very nice. The last minute, the French, uh, from the Sureté, this is the...

L.B. The frontier police?

F.W. No, the Sureté, this is the...

L.B. Oh, the Sureté, yeah, that is the police.

F.W. The police, they say, "Get out, get out. Leave everything there. Get out. Get out." Und, the last minute, we get out of France. But we cannot go, the paper were not ready. And my sister was working here for a Jewish family in New York; und they, und my son, und my sister, they sent the paper. Und then, we were 2 months in Lisbon. , in Lisbon the war broke out with America and Germany.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Und, when we was on the ship, we had to go down from the ship, und, uh, uh, all German weren't, uh...

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(Tape ends)

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F.W. ...2 months we had to stay in Lisbon. So, uh, all German-born have to go down from the ship again....for come over here.

L.B. Now, how could you support yourself during that time?

F.W. Um, I had, I had a friend, uh, my, my husband had relation to a friend; und my sister sent us money from, she were in New York, she sent us...money.

L.B. So you were fortunate that your husband had these connections all over.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. All over Europe, actually.

F.W. That's right, that's right...that's right.

L.B. Because people without connections couldn't get out so easily.

F.W. No, no, no. Und then we sent, uh, you have to pay more money for the...

L.B. Passage.

F.W. ...come over here.

L.B. Right.

F.W. We paid already everything.

L.B. Right.

F.W. Und then I have to pay, uh, to borrow more money to come over here. Und, uh... finally, after 2 months, then we get the paper. We get...?

L.B. Who, who said that you had to pay more money? The, the United States, or, or the Portugese, or the ship company?

F.W. I think the ship company, I think the ship company. Our passage were paid...

L.B. Yes.

F.W. ...from France out. Und, uh, then we were in, going in contact with the HIAS.

L.B. Yes.

F.W. Und they arranged everything.

L.B. And the what?

F.W. The HIAS, make everything arra...arrangements.

L.B. Yes, yes. Because the Hirschens also had to pay more after their passage was paid.

F.W. Yah, yah. Yah, yah. Then there were 4 weeks of the water. Und, everything, afraid of the German U-boats coming. Und, und, uh...

L.B. And you had your daughter with you, right?

F.W. My daughter, yah.

L.B. You, and your husband, and your daughter, right?

F.W. And daughter, yah, yah. Und then we come over here, und, uh...Then this were same, we're coming all to Ellis Island.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Und, uh, so nobody knows from...we sent so many telegrams, but my s...my sister and my son don't re...receive the telegrams. Und, uh, so one day we are landed over here, in Newport News, we get, Newport News we landed over here.

L.B. That's in Virginia.

F.W. Yah,

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Und then they say we're coming to Ellis Island. Und there we get the first, uh...they treat us very well, und we get the first white bread, everything's O.K. when we see the white bread over there, und sandwiches. Und, then we come, nach, New York. Und then, the man say, come in, somebody come in the train and say, "You are free. You can go where you want." So, we don't speak English, where we want go? So we went in und stayed on the station. Und, uh...my daughter, she speaks, she was speaking a little English, she called my son. Und, he was home, und he say, "We're sorry, where are you, where are you?" Then she told him "There-und-there." Und then he noticed my sister; und then, after a while they come over here. "Stay there. Don't go anywhere. Stay there." (Laughter). Yah. (Very long pause.) Yah. (Pause). Und then we worked in Union College, my husband and I. When the Kappa Iu, the boys had to go in the War und that house get closed, we were cooking for 750 Navy cadets, und 150 civilian, nights, nights, yah, from 9:00 to 7:00 in the morning.

L.B. Who was cooking? You?

F.W. He and my husband.

L.B. Ach.

F.W. We made the breakfast und the, the lunch ready for the Navy cadets.

L.B. Isn't that great. (Laughs). That's a lot of cooking.

F.W. Yah, und don't speak English. We don't speak English in this time...

L.B. Oh, when you came you were hired, is that it?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. You didn't own the place.

F.W. Oh no, oh no, I had no money, come with nothing.

L.B. Did you like it there?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. In that house?

F.W. Uh, Bill say, the manager from the Hale House say...

L.B. What was his name?

F.W. Bill. Uh, uh, the second name, I don't know, it's just.....Und he say, "Max und Freda..." will we have our work done. So I called him up und asked what we have to do. Und we have, every night we break 2, 2 cases egg, eggs. We have to make scram...scrambled eggs, fry eggs...(Laughter)...for the, we have the lunch make, the lunch und the breakfast make ready for the, for the boys. Und cook the meat sometimes, you know. And we peeled the potatoes by hand, the bags, big bags, they have no machine at this time.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. So, and we were glad to have to do something nights...

L.B. Right.

F.W. ...otherwise the time don't go by...

L.B. Right.

F.W. Und, he say, "Max und Freda..." he say, "...you have too much responsibility und the people here have not enough." He was telling us.

L.B. Did Union College own this house? Did the college own the house that you were working in?

F.W. This were in Union College itself where we were working. No, when we had this house in, on Seward Place?

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. No, we bought this, we bought this place.

L.B. Oh, then, before you bought this, you were working in Hale House, was it?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Oh, I see.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. You're part of Union College history, then.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. Well, then, you belong in the library.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. I see. You were working in Hale House.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. And feeding all, I wondered how you could fit all those boys into a house...

F.W. No, this, this wasn't...

L.B. Oh, I see. Did you understand that, Robyn?

F.W. Yah.

R.K. Yeah, sort of.

L.B. Oh, I see.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. So you were really the 2 cooks in Hale House.

F.W. Yah, 2, were more, we were the night cooks.

L.B. You were the night cooks.

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. Ohh. And how long did you work in there?

F.W. A year.

L.B. A year. What year was that, do you remember?

F.W. Wait a minute... (Long pause)...

, then came to, nach, Voorheesville, forty-...I, then we had, first we had a place in Voorheesville, we worked in a factory, we were, had a cafeteria out there. Und then...the, the boys come from, the Kappa Nu boys come back from the War und they begged us, "Come in Max, cook for us. Come in, Max and Freda, cook for us." Then we, uh, were looking for a house on, on Seward Place. Und, I think this were '48.

L.B. '48?

F.W. I think '48.

L.B. Now wait a minute. So the house on Seward Place was the Kappa Nu fraternity?

F.W. No, no, Kappa Nu fraternity were on Union Avenue.

L.B. That's, uh, so, that, you were there too?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. In their fraternity house?

F.W. Yah, this were our first...

L.B. When was this? Before Hale House or after?

F.W. Before, before, this were our first job.

L.B. Oh.

F.W. Cooking for the boys. This were our first job.

L.B. At Kappa Nu.

F.W. Yah, Kappa Nu, yah.

L.B. Then you went to Hale House?

F.W. Then to Hale House.

L.B. And then you bought your own house on Seward.

F.W. After this, yah. Then we were 3 years in Voorheesville.

L.B. That was the first thing?

F.W. No...

L.B. No?

F.W. This were after, after, after Union College.

L.B. Oh.

R.K. Did you, you spent some time in New York City?

F.W. Yah.

R.K. You stayed there for...

F.W. Yah.

R.K. ...2 or 3 years?

F.W. No, no, not so long, no. My husband went first in Union College and cooked for the boys; and I had a job in New York, I was working in a factory, und, in a , you know, , for the soldiers, for the soldiers,

sewing, und things for sewing. Und, my husband went first. He don't want stay in New York, he don't want...

L.B. He didn't like New York?

R.K. Too big.

F.W. No, no, too big. Und...

L.B. How did he find this, uh, job at Union College?

F.W. He has 2 sisters here, married, already.

L.B. In Schenectady?

na' F.W. Yah. Mrs. Stagman...Stagman, she was, uh, she had a shoe, her husband has a shoe repair...store.

L.B. Is she still living?

F.W. No, no.

L.B. Oh.

F.W. She passed away. She was taken here as a young girl. Und, uh, another sister, Marvin Friedman, you know Marvin Friedman, the Van Dyke?

L.B. Yeah, I know the Van Dyke, and...

F.W. He's my nephew.

L.B. Marvin Friedman?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. That's your husband...uh, on your husband's side, he's your nephew?

F.W. Yah, his sister, yah. His mother were on my hu...yah.

L.B. Is that sister still living?

F.W. No.

L.B. No.

F.W. No, no.

L.B. So that's how he made a connection with Schenectady?

F.W. Yah, he would not stay in New York, not for anything. Yah.

L.B. So then, when he was established, then you came up...

F.W. I come up, then, yah.

L.B. ...to join him. And your daughter came with you?

F.W. No, she stayed in New York. She had a job, she was a babysitter. Uhhh, first she was governess, und then babysitter, und then, I don't know then what she did after. Then she get married.

L.B. I see. What time is it? Because I don't want to keep you too long. That's, uh, we're running close to 2 hours, yeah...

R.K. Mm hm, it's after 3:00.

L.B. ...we've been here for 2 hours. And I think that's time. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us, Mrs. Wolfsheimer, that is, that, you know... Did we miss anything on the sheet, Robyn?

R.K. I think we didn't talk a lot about politics.

L.B. No, I understand.

F.W. No politics, no, no, no.

L.B. You know, you did..you didn't, you weren't interested in politics, is that it?

F.W. No, no.

L.B. Is that what you're saying?

F.W. Yah, yah.

L.B. That's what I thought.

F.W. We were Democrats, that's no secret.

L.B. No, I don't mean here. We're talking about European politics.

F.W. No, we were, uh....loyal to the Kaiser und things like this, I had...you know, but otherwise, no.

L.B. Now, but, once the war was over, see I did ask the question, and there was all this upheaval going on, in Germany...

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Did you pay attention to what was happening? Did you take sides? Did you have feelings?

F.W. That's the reason why my husband, uh, why they want my husband, he was against, uh, against, uh, Hitler, you know. That's the reason they want him, they want him back. He were, he were against Hitler.

L.B. He was against Hitler? Did he belong to a political party?

F.W. Yah, Democrat, you know, So...Social...

L.B. Social Democrat.

F.W. Social Democrat, yah.

L.B. All right. But, you see, there was, there were revolutions taking place in Germany.

F.W. Oh no, this were not, this were not, we were not part of this.

L.B. All right.

F.W. This were the Communists.

L.B. Right.

F.W. No, no.

L.B. But then there were other things taking place. There were other putsches.

F.W. Yah...putsches...

15 L.B. There were putsches, there was a Katputsche.

F.W. ...in, in München, in Munich.

L.B. Right, that was one, and there were others.

F.W. No, no...

L.B. Uh, none of these...

F.W. No, no.

L.B. Did you read about them?

F.W. Yah, I read about them...

L.B. Did they...

F.W. ...we heard about them, but no, nothing...

L.B. You didn't really pay attention.

F.W. No, no.

L.B. And you never thought it would affect your life at all?

F.W. No, no, no. We had a very nice life before, before Hitler, und, uh, no, we were...uh, one, one, like one...one family together, you know, in the place where we live, in Weickersheim.

L.B. Yes.

16 F.W. Everybody was nice to us and we had a very nice life und...no....'

R.K. Trouble?

L.B. No, uh, this, I know...

F.W. No between, no between Jews and...an..semitism...

L.B. Jew..uh, no anti-Semitism, you mean?

F.W. No, no.

L.B. There was no anti-Semitism?

F.W. No, no. Und when this came, this were, they were so bad...for the, this were the worst thing which happens to the, to the man who was living there. No. When the anti-Semitism came...

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Yah, it was the baddest thing in....the people, the Jewish, the Jews who were not there, we had to suffer so much.

L.B. And it took them all by surprise?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. (Long pause). That was a terrible thing, terrible. Well, in that case, I will say thank you...

F.W. You're welcome.

L.B. For Union College, and for all those Kappa Nu boys, and for all those Navy cadets...

F.W. The Kappa Nu boys, some, some come and visit me today.

L.B. Ohh, do they?

R.K. Oh, isn't that nice.

L.B. Isn't that nice, they do?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. They come here?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Yeah, what do they...

F.W. Very nice, very nice boys. I had one from, he was living in Liberty, one lives in Albany, a very nice boy. We were like parents to them.

L.B. Yes.

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. I have to...there, at one time, there were 40 boys, I had 40 boys. Und, uh, they all want, uh, good eating, you know. Und, they want I make twice dessert, for lunch und for evening time. (laughter). Und I have no mixer, I had to make all by hand. I say, "I cannot do it anymore." Und, had, nach, to clean the rooms.

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. Yah, und had, nach, to clean the rooms. So, later on I say, some people told me, "Don't do it anymore, Freda. Say you be the cook, you be not a cleaning woman."

L.B. Yeah.

F.W. So, but, then I say, say to them, "You have to buy a mixer. I cannot do by hand this anymore, dessert for twice."

L.B. Km hm. Did they get you a mixer?

F.W. Yah.

L.B. Yeah.

R.K. Oh sure, can't give up dessert. (laughter).

L.B. All right, then I'll say thank you very much.

F.W. You're welcome.

R.K. Thank you.

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(Tape ends)